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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session

Observer status for the Economic Community of Central African States in the General Assembly

Letter dated 9 November 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In conformity with the provisions of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and on instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter and memorandum sent by His Excellency Mr. Santiago Nzobeya Efuman, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophone Affairs of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Community of Central African States, on behalf of the member States, requesting the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Observer status for the Economic Community of Central African States in the General Assembly".

(*Signed*) José Luis **Esono Nsue Nchama**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 9 November 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with the conclusions of the special Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States, held on 23 June 2000, in Libreville, I have the honour to inform you that, in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Council of Ministers of the Community, and pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have requested the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Observer status for the Economic Community of Central African States in the General Assembly".

In this connection, please find attached an explanatory memorandum which has been prepared in conformity with rule 20 of the rules of procedure.

(*Signed*) Santiago **Nsobeya Efuman Nchama**

Appendix

Explanatory memorandum by the Economic Community of Central African States

Introduction

The Heads of State and Government of the following countries of the Central African subregion: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe, decided in 1983 to create the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

In so doing, they demonstrated their firm intention to strive together for subregional integration as a means of improving the well-being of their respective populations.

The Treaty establishing ECCAS entered into force in 1984 and the Community's Secretariat was established in 1985.

It must be acknowledged, however, that because of the many conflicts that have bedevilled most of the States of Central Africa, it has not been possible to realize our long-held dream of transforming our subregion into a haven of peace, cooperation and development.

I. Restoration of a context conducive to regional integration in Central Africa

The Heads of State and Government of the States of the Economic Community of Central African States have identified the lack of confidence engendered by tensions and conflicts as the main cause of the stagnation and paralysis of the Community.

In order to deal with this situation, those States turned to the United Nations and requested its support. Thus, on their initiative, resolution 46/37 B was adopted on 6 December 1991, in implementation of which the Secretary-General of the United Nations established on 28 May 1992 the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

The Committee has served as a preferred forum for political consultations among government representatives of the States of the subregion. Its work has made it possible to conduct continuing high-level consultations and promote the elaboration and adoption of important confidence-building measures, strengthened by the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

It is in this context that the Heads of State and Government of the States members of ECCAS, at the end of the ninth regular session of the Community, held on 24 June 1999 in Malabo, decided to revitalize the activities of the Community, notably by providing it with adequate financial and human resources. Thus, ECCAS can at last become a real instrument for the integration of the economies of its member States and promote development and cooperation among their peoples, with the ultimate objective of making it one of the five pillars of the African Economic Community and helping Central Africa to confront the challenges of globalization more effectively.

II. Main aspects of the revitalization

1. With regard to institution-building, a post of Assistant Secretary-General for Human Integration, Peace and Stability has been established. Central Africa thus acknowledges the importance of peace and security between and within States as a factor of development.

Furthermore, the original treaty has been supplemented by other legal instruments establishing respectively the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which is responsible for conflict prevention and management, the Central African Multinational Force, a Central African early-warning mechanism and the Defence and Security Commission.

Other measures have been the establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and especially the creation of a network of Central African parliamentarians, as a prelude to the establishment of a Community Parliament.

2. The rehabilitation of the traditional integration areas has been divided into two components.

With regard to the first component, the following measures have been taken:

- Establishment of an autonomous financing mechanism for ECCAS and integration activities;
- Creation of a fund for development and subregional solidarity;
- Promotion of Community infrastructure projects in the areas of road, maritime and air transport, telecommunications and energy.

As to the second component, a scheme for the liberalization of intra-Community trade and the free movement of persons and goods was to be launched by the reactivation on a trial basis of decision No. 03/CCEG/VI/90, concerning the free movement of certain categories of citizens of member States within ECCAS.

3. New initiatives taken as part of the Central African Community project have been the exploration of new fields of cooperation such as combating poverty and the anti-drug campaign, and the initiation of a new approach involving the private sector and non-governmental organizations in the life of the Community.

III. The Economic Community of Central African States deserves to be granted observer status at the United Nations

The United Nations has already granted observer status to other African regional economic communities, such as the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States. It is therefore necessary to strike a balance with regard to cooperation between the United Nations and the various regions of the world.

Such a step would, moreover, formalize long-standing cooperation which has produced encouraging results in the context of the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. It is in this context that confidence has been re-established in the relations between States, thus permitting an effective revival of the Community.

Lastly, this step would have a strong political and diplomatic impact in that the community of nations would be lending its support to the economic integration efforts undertaken by the States of the subregion, with a view to African economic integration.